

## George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754-1799

**\*To ROBERT ORME<sup>76</sup>**

Mount Vernon, March 15, 1755.

Sir: I was not favoured with your agreeable Letter, (of the 2d) till yesterday, acquainting me with the notice his Excellency, is pleased to honour me with, by kindly desiring my Company in his Family Its true, Sir, I have, ever since I declined a command in this Service express'd and Inclination to serve the Ensuing Campaigne as a Volunteer; and this believe me Sir, is not a little encreased, since its likely to be conducted by a Gentleman of the General's great good Character;

But beside this, and the laudable desire I may have to serve, (with my poor abilitys) my King and Country, I must be ingenuous enough to confess, I am not a little biass'd by selfish and private views. To be plain Sir, I wish for nothing more earnestly than to attain a small degree of knowledge in the Military Art: and believing a more favourable oppertunity cannot be wished than serving under a Gentleman of his Excellencys known ability and experience, it will, you must reasonably, imagine not a little contribute to influence me in my choice. But, Sir, as I have taken the liberty so far to observe that freely, I shall beg your Indulgence yet a little longer, while I say, that the only bar that can check me in the pursuit of these my desires is the inconveniences that must necessarily arise on some proceedings in a late space—(I mean before the General's arrival) had in some measure abated the edge of my Intentions and determined me to lead a life of greater inactivity, and into which I was just entering at no small expence, the business whereof must greatly suffer in my

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76. Robert Orme was a lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards, who accompanied Braddock to Virginia as an aide, with the rank of captain. He was wounded at the Monongahela; returned to England, and resigned from the army. He married the only daughter of Charles, Viscount Townshend. His journal of the Braddock expedition was printed by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1855.

absence.

I shall do myself the pleasure of waiting upon his Excellency, so soon as I hear of his arrival at Alexandria, (and wou'd sooner, was I certain where) till which I shall decline saying further on this head; begging you'll be kind enough to assure him, that I shall always retain a grateful Sense of the favour he was kindly pleas'd to offer me, and that I should have embraced this oppertunity of writing to him, had I not some little time ago wrote a congratulatory Letter on his safe arrival &c. And as !

flatter myself, you will favour me in communicating my Sentiments herein, it will need no other mentn. or reptition.

You do me a singular favour, in proposing an acquaintance which cannot but be attended with the most agreeable Intimacy on my side; as you may already experience, by the familiarity and freedom with which I now assume to treat you; a freedom, which, even if disagreeable, you'll excuse, as I shall lay the whole blame at your door, for encouraging me to thro' lack of that formality which otherwise might have appeared in my deportment, on this occasion.

The hope of shortly seeing you will be an excuse for my not adding more than that I shall endeavour to approve myself worthy your friendship, and that beg to be esteem'd your most Obedient  
Servant<sup>77</sup>

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77. The text is from the first letter in a small volume labeled "Letter Book Relating to Braddock's Defeat." It contains 48 letters and 1 or 2 memoranda, all in Washington's writing, and dates from Mar. 15, 1755, to December 6 of that year. It was this volume that drew from a well-known American author and scholar the comment that "Perhaps the most touching proof of his [Washington's] own self-depreciation was something he did when he had become conscious that his career would be written about. Still in his possession were the letter-books in which he had kept copies of his correspondence while in command of the Virginia Regiment between 1754 and 1759, and late in life he went through these volumes, and, by interlining corrections, carefully built them into better literary form."

Ford, in his edition of the *Writings of Washington* (vol. 1, p. xx), says: "The changes he [Washington] made at a late period of his life are so distinctive, both in form of letters and the colors of the ink, as to make an error of date impossible." The proper explanation of the matter is, simply, that after Washington returned to Mount Vernon in 1783 and had an opportunity to examine the magnificent piece of work done by Richard Varick in transcribing his Revolutionary War letters, the idea of preserving all his letters in book form seems to have crystallized. The earliest letters were these Braddock-campaign epistles and a casual perusal of them showed Washington the necessity of clarifying his youthful redundancy of expression and simplifying his involved thought, so that Robert Lewis could do the copying without making continual appeals for decisions as to punctuation and meaning. This is the common-sense view of the matter, when romance is rigorously excluded. Because of the value of the original texts as a record of Washington's letter-writing ability in his early twenties, a great deal of time and trouble has been given to deciphering them. The task was difficult, as the heavy ink of 30 years later has almost obliterated that of 1755, and in some instances Washington scraped off the original with a knife; but the texts here printed are Washington's letters

as he wrote them at the time. The changes made at the later period were incorporated by Lewis in the letterbook record and were adopted by Ford, after deliberate consideration, in his edition of the *Writings* and have been followed by all others. His text should be compared with this edition for comparison as to the improvement of Washington's style and etymology in the course of 30 years.

**\*To ROBERT ORME**

Mount Vernon, April 2, 1755.

Dear Sir: The arrival of a good deal of Company (among whom is my Mother, alarm'd with the report of my attending your Fortunes) prevents me the pleasure of waiting upon you to day as I intended;<sup>78</sup> therefore I beg you'll be kind enough to make my compliments and excuse to the Genrl., who I hope to hear is greatly recover'd from his indisposition; and recruited sufficiently to prosecute his journ'y. to Annapolis.

I find myself much embarrass'd with my Affairs; having no person in whom I can confide, to entrust the management with. Yet, under these disadvantages and circumstances, I am determined to do myself the honour of accompanying you with this proviso only, that the General will be kind enough to permit my return, so soon as the [ ? ] or grand Affair is over, (if desir'd). Or, if there should be any space of inaction long enough to admit of a visit (for otherwise I could by no means obtain my own consent, what ever private losses I might sustain) to indulge me therein and I need not add, how much I should be obliged by joining at Wills Creek only,<sup>79</sup> for this the General has kindly promised. These things Sir, however unwarrantable they may appear at first sight, I hope will not be taken amiss when its consider'd how unprepar'd I am at present to quit a Family, and Estate scarcely settled, and in the utmost confusion.<sup>80</sup>

I have inclos'd you a letter from Colo. Fairfax to Governour Shirley,<sup>81</sup> which with his Compliments, he desir'd might be given to Mr. Shirley: He also sends his Blessing to you, and desires you may be a good boy and deserve them [ ? ] at present he entertains those pleasing, and sanguine hopes that a dutiful and worthy Son shou'd expect from the most paternal fondness of an indulgent Father, this for your comfort. I herewith send you a small Chart of the back Country, which tho' imperfect and roughly drawn (for want of proper utensils) may, notwithstanding, give you a better knowledge of these parts than that you have hitherto had an opportunity of acquiring.<sup>82</sup>

I shall do myself the honour of waiting upon the General so soon as I hear of his return from Annapolis. My Compliments attends him, Mr. Shirley &c. And I am Sir etc.

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78. General Braddock landed in Virginia on February 20. The transports with the British troops, who were to act under him, came into the Chesapeake soon afterwards. These he ordered up the Potomac to Alexandria, or, as it was then sometimes called, Bellhaven, where the troops debarked. Five companies were cantoned there, one company was stationed at Dumfries, six companies at Fredericksburg and Falmouth, three and a half companies at Winchester, and half a company at Conococheague. In Maryland one company was cantoned at Bladensburg, another at Upper Marlboro, and two at Frederick. Some of the troops were landed below Alexandria, at the nearest point to Fredericksburg. The general remained at Williamsburg, planning with the governor preparations for the approaching campaign.

The following order of the King, dated at St. James, Nov. 12, 1754, respecting the rank of Colonial officers, was brought out by General Braddock: "All troops serving by commission signed by us, or by our general commanding in chief in North America, shall take rank before all troops, which may serve by commission from any of the governors, lieutenant or deputy governors, or president for the time being. And it is our further pleasure, that the general and field officers of the provincial troops shall have no rank with the general and field officers, who serve by commission from us; but that all captains and other inferior officers of our forces, who are or may be employed in North America, are, on all detachments, courts-martial, and other duty, wherein they may be joined with officers serving by commission from the governors, lieutenant or deputy governors, or president for the time being of the said provinces, to command and take post of the said provincial officers of the like rank, though the commissions of the said provincial officers of like rank should be of elder date."

Since his resignation in October, Colonel Washington had remained inactive at Mount Vernon. General Braddock, knowing his value and the importance of securing his services to the expedition, directed Mr. Orme, his aide-de-camp, to write to him the following letter, the original of which is in the *Washington Papers*, proposing an expedient by which the chief obstacles of rank would be removed.

"Williamsburg, 2 March, 1755.

"Sir: The general, having been informed that you expressed some desire to make the campaign, but that you declined it upon some disagreeableness that you thought might arise from the regulations of command, has ordered me to acquaint you, that he will be very glad of your company in his family, by which all inconveniences of that kind will be obviated. I shall think myself very happy to

form an acquaintance with a person so universally esteemed, and shall use every opportunity of assuring you how much I am, Sir, your most obedient servant.

“Robert Orme, Aid-de-camp.”

— *Sparks*.

Captain Orme was with the army at Alexandria, 9 miles from Mount Vernon. Soon after General Braddock arrived in Virginia he wrote (March 10) to the governors of Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania, requesting them to meet him at Annapolis in Maryland to concert measures for future operation. The general, Commodore Keppel, and Governor Dinwiddie proceeded to Annapolis, but the place of meeting was afterwards changed to Alexandria, where they all assembled on April 13 and concerted measures for the united action of the middle and northern colonies. The minutes of this council are printed in *Documentary History of New York*, vol. 2, p. 376. It was thought by some that New York ought to be the center of operations, as affording greater facilities for attacking the French at their strongest points, but Braddock's instructions were positive for him to proceed to the Ohio. He marched from Alexandria on April 20.— *Sparks*.

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79. In reply Captain Orme wrote: “The general orders me to give you his compliments and to assure you his wishes are to make it agreeable to yourself and consistent with your affairs, and, therefore, he desires you will so settle your business at home as to join him at Will's Creek if more convenient to you; and, whenever you find it necessary to return, he begs you will look upon yourself as entirely master, and judge what is proper to be done.”

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80. Lawrence Washington's estate, which included, of course, Mount Vernon. From 1755 on, for several years, Washington paid a yearly rent for Mount Vernon to Col. George Lee, who had married Lawrence Washington's widow, Ann Fairfax.

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81. Gov. William Shirley, of Massachusetts, commander in chief of the British operations in the Colonies.

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82. This map has not come to light. It was probably destroyed with the baggage lost at the Monongahela and Dunbar's retreat.

**\*To WILLIAM BYRD**

Mount Vernon, April 20, 1755.

Dr. Sir: I was sorry it was not in my power to wait upon you at Westover last Christmas. I had enjoy'd much satisfaction in the thought when an unexpected accident put it entirely out of my power to comply either with my promise, or Inclination; both of which equally urg'd me to make the Visit.

I am now preparing for, and shall in a few days sett off, to serve in the ensuing Campainge; with different Views from what I had before; for here, if I can gain any credit, or if I am entitled to the least countenance and esteem, it must be from serving my Country with a free, Voluntary will; for I can very truly say, I have no expectation of reward but the hope of meriting the love of my Country and friendly regard of my acquaintances; and as to any prospect of obtaining a Comn. I have none, and am pretty well assur'd it is not in Genl. Braddock's to give such a one as I wou'd accept off as I am told a Compa. is the highest Comn. that is now vested in his gift. He disir'd my Company this Campainge, has honoured me with particular marks of Esteem, and kindly invited me into his Family; which will ease me of that expence, which otherwise wou'd undoubtedly have accrued in furnishing a proper Camp Provision; whereas the expence will now be easy, (comparatively speaking) as baggage Horses, tents and some other necessarys will constitute the whole of the charge tho' I mean to say to leave a Family just settling, and in the utmost confusion and disorder (as mine is in at present) will be the means of my using my private Fortune very greatly, but however this may happen, it shall be no hindrance to my making this Campaigne. I am Sir with very g't esteem, etc.

**\*To CARTER BURWELL<sup>84</sup>**

Mount Vernon April 20, 1755.

Sir: From the goodness of your offer last Assembly, I flatter myself you will be kind enough to acquaint the Gentlemen of the Committee (at this meeting) with the loss I sustained during my Appointment as Paymaster to the Virginia Forces (either by Robbery or neglect of charging) and so far favour my Pretensions, as to solicit them in my behalf, which I am convinced will be the means of them refunding me the money I lost to the amount of 50 odd pounds. I shou'd not have presum'd to ask this fay. (nor shall I in any shape urge it) as the Gentlemen were so kind to grant me an allowance for my trouble if I had not, in other respects, suffered considerably in the Service; for besides the loss of many valuable Paper's, a valuable Servant who died a few days after of his Wounds, my wearing Apparel, Books, Horses &c. which amounted to no trifling Sum in the whole, and in which I alone suffer'd by being the only person who got their things out a few days before the Engagement I say not to mention the above things, I lost at the time a very valuable and uncommon Circumportor calculated not only for Superficial Measure, but for taking of Altitudes, and other useful purposes which I carried out solely for the Public use imagining it necessary for laying of Grounds for Forti'ns.

&c. I also lost many other things w<sup>ch</sup> I sd. have receiv'd and sh'd have mention'd in a Publick way upon my first comg. in, had I not become Sensible of the Genl. was pretty much pester'd with complaints of this sort from several of the Officers whose losses, tho' I knew were greatly inferiour to mine, yet I also knew they were less able to bear them, and this motive alone prevented me from mentg. any thing relating to myself, on this hd. till now, when I hope you will be kind enough to serve me.

I am just ready to embark a 2d. time in the Service of my Country; to merit whose regard and esteem, is the sole motive that induces me to make this Campaigne; for I can very truly say I have no views, either of profitting or rising in the Service, as I go a Volunteer, witht. rank or Pay, and am certain it is not in Genl. Braddocks power to give a Comn. that I wd. accept; I might add, that so far from being serviceable I am thoroughly convinced it will prove very detrimental to my private Affairs, as I shall have a Family scarcely Settled, and in gt. disorder but however prejudicial this may be, it shall not stop me from going. A happy Issue to all your resolves is most sincerely wish'd by Sir etc.

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84. Chairman of the military committee of the House of Burgesses.

**\*To JOHN ROBINSON<sup>83</sup>**

Mount Vernon, April 20, 1755.

Dear Sir: I little expected when I wrote you last I shou'd so soon engage in another Campaigne; but in this I hope I may be allow'd to claim some small share of merit; if it is consider'd that the sole motive w<sup>ch</sup>. invites me to the Field, is the laudable desire of servg. my Country; and not for the gratification of any lucrative ends; this, I flatter myself, will manifestly appear by my going a Volunteer, without expectation of reward, or prospect of attaining a Command; as I am confidantly assur'd it is not in Genl. Braddocks power to give a Comn. that I wou'd accept. Perhaps with any other, the above declaration might be look'd upon as a piece of self sufficient merit; which, being unwilling to loose, I choose to proclaim it myself; but by you Sir, I hope it will be taken in a different light, who seem'd to sympathize in my disappointments, and lent your friendly Aid to reinstate me in a suitable Command; which mark of your approbation was not lost upon one who is always sensible off and ready to acknowledge an obligation; and this is the reason why I am so much more expressive in my Sentiments to you than I shou'd choose be to the World, whose Censures and Criticisms often place the best design's in the worst light; and but, to be ingenuous, I must confess I had other Intentions in writing and



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83. Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates and treasurer of the colony.

if there is any merit in going out upon such terms as I do I was unwilling to loose it among my Friends, who I did not doubt might be made to believe I had some advantageous offers that engaged my services, when in reality it is very far from it; for I expect to be a considerable looser in my private Affairs by going. Its true, I have been importuned to make this Campaign by Genl. Braddock in his Family who I suppose, imagined that the small knowledge I have had an opportunity of acquiring of the Country, Indians, &c. worthy of his notice; and therefor thought I might become useful to him in the progress of this Expedition.

Colo. Carter Burwell the last Assembly, upon hearing that I had lost 50 odd pounds during my appt. as Paymaster, desir'd I wd. petition the Committee to have it refunded: assurg. me at the same time that he wou'd solicit the Gentn. in my behalf. I declined it then thinking it might not be well received, as I had been allowed a Comn.; but if he shou'd propose it at a future meeting, and it does not appear to carry a face of unreasonableness, I hope you will do me the favour to 2d. him. I must own after meeting with the indulgencies I did, I sh'd. not have ask'd this, had it not been proposed by a Member; and had I not been so considerable a looser before in the Service, loosg. many valuable Papers, cloathing, Horses and sevl. other things; some of which, and of no inconsiderable value, I car'd out entirely for the publick use, and forbore mentg. of it till this as I knew you were greatly Pester'd with complaints of this sort from Officers that were less able to bear them, tho' their losses are much more inconsiderable than mine, for I had unfortunately got my baggage from Wills Creek but a few days before the Engagemt. in wch. I also had a valuable Servt. Wounded, who died in a few days after. I thought it expedient just to mention these Facts that you might turn them to any advantage you see proper, or to drop it altogether, if you think they be unreasonable. I heartily wish a happy Issue to all your Resolves, &c.

**\*To WILLIAM FAIRFAX**

Mount Vernon, April 23, 1755.

Dear Sir: I cannot think of quitting Fairfax<sup>85</sup> without embracing this last opportunity of bidding you farewell. I this day set out for Wills Creek, where I expect to meet the Gen'l. and to stay, I fear too long, as our March must be regulated by the slow movements of the Train,<sup>86</sup> which I am sorry to say, I think will be tedious in advancing very tedious indeed, as answerable to the expectation I have long conceived tho' few believ'd.



Alexandria has been honoured with 5 Governors in Consultation; a happy presage I hope, not only of the success of this Expedition, but for our little Town; for surely such honours must have arisen from the Commodious, and pleasant situation of this place the best constitutional qualitys for Popularity and encrease of a (now) flourishing Trade.

I have had the honour to be introduced to the Governors; and of being well receiv'd by them all, especially Mr. Shirley, whose character and appearance has perfectly charm'd me, as I think every word and every action discovers the Gent'n. and great Politician. I heartily wish something of such unanimity amongst us, as appear'd to Reign between him and his Assembly; when they, to expedite the Business, and forward his journey here sat till eleven, and twelve o'clock at Nights.

It will be needless, as I know your punctuality requires no repetition's to remind you of an Affair, ab't. which I wrote some time ago; therefore I shall only beg my compliments to Mr. Nicholas<sup>87</sup> and his Lady, and to all Friends who think me worthy of their inquiries. I am Dear Sir etc.

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85. Mount Vernon is in Fairfax County.

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86. The train of artillery.

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87. Robert Carter Nicholas, who succeeded John Robinson as treasurer of Virginia in 1766 and served until after 1775.— *Toner*.

**\*To MRS. GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX**

Bullskin, April 30, 1755.

Dear Madam: In order to engage your correspondence, I think it expedient just to deserve it; which I shall endeavour to do by embracing the earliest, and every opportunity of writing to you.

It will be needless to expatiate on the pleasures that communication of this kind will afford me, as it shall suffice to say; a corrispondance with my Friends is the greatest satisfaction I expect to enjoy, in the course of the Campaigne, and that none of my friends are able to convey more real delight than you can to whom I stand indebted for so many obligations.

If an old proverb can claim my belief I am certainly [ ? ]<sup>88</sup> share of success; for surely no man ever made a worse beginning, than I have; out of 4 Horses which we brought from home, one was kill'd

outright, and the other 3 render'd unfit for use; so that I have been detain'd here three days already, and how much longer I may continue to be so, the Womb of time most discover.

I must beg my Compliments to Miss. Hannah, Miss Dent,<sup>89</sup> and any other's that think me worthy of their enquirys.

I am Madam Yr. most Obedt. Servt.

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88. The erasure at this point was made with a knife and the writing is entirely obliterated.

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89. Hannah Fairfax, who married Warner Washington, of Gloucester, and Miss Elizabeth Dent, who lived at Belvoir. Miss Dent was the daughter, or sister, of Thomas Dent, long a clerk in the Northern Neck office.

**\*To WILLIAM FAIRFAX**

Winchester May 5, 1755.

Dear Sir: I overtook the General at Frederick Town in Maryland and from thence we proceeded to this place, where we shall remain till the arrival of the 2nd. Division of the Train, (which we hear left Alexandria on Tuesday last); after that we shall continue our March to Wills Creek; from whence it is imagined we shall not stir till the latter end of this Month, for want of Waggon's, and other conveniences to Transports our Baggage &c. over the Mount'n.

You will naturally conclude that to pass through Maryl'd. (when no business requir'd it,) was an uncommon, and extraordinary route for the Gen'l. and Colo. Dunbarr's Regiment to this place; but at the same time the reason, however, was obvious to say that those who promoted it had rather have the communication should be that way, than through Virginia; but I now believe the Imposition has to evidently appeared for the Imposer's to subject us to the same Inconvencies again.<sup>90</sup> please to make my Compt's. to Colo. G.<sup>91</sup> to whom I shall write by the next oppertunity, and excuse haste. I am &c.

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90. The selection of the route was due to Sir John St. Clair, who thought to gain dispatch by dividing the army, sending one division with powder and ordnance by Winchester and the other with military and hospital stores by Frederick, in Maryland. On reaching Frederick, Col. Thomas Dunbar found there was no road through Mary. land to Fort Cumberland, and he was compelled to cross the

Potomac and take the Winchester route. St. Clair expected Governor Morris to build a road to Wills Creek, and taking him to task sharply for his failure, received a “set-down” from Morris, as Governor Shirley called it.— *Ford*.

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91. George William Fairfax.

**\*To THOMAS, LORD FAIRFAX**

Winchester, May 6, 1755.

My Lord: I have had the misfortune to lose 3 of my Horses since I left home; and not bringing money enough to buy other's and to answer all the contingent expences that may arise in the course of the Campagne, I have made bold to solicit your Lordship's assistance which will infinitely oblige me.

About 40 or 50 £ will supply my wants, and for which I shou'd gladly pay your Lordship Interest, beside many thanks for the favour, as I am greatly distress'd at this present, not being able to proceed well with't.

The Gen'l. sets out to morrow, and proceeds directly to Wills Creek; which, together with the hurry of Business, that has happen'd since we came to Town, has been a means of depriving me of the pleasure of waiting upon your Lordship, as I intended to have done. Please to make my Compt. to Colo. Martin.<sup>92</sup> I am Yr. Lordships etc.

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92. Col. Thomas Bryan Martin was the son of Denny Martin and Lord Fairfax's sister Frances. He was county lieutenant of Hampshire and a burgess from that county, 1756–1758.

**\*To JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Winchester, May 6, 1755.

Dear Jack: A very fatiguing Ride, and long round brought me to the General (the day I parted with you) at Frederick Town; a small Village 15 Miles below the blue Ridge in Maryland from thence we proceeded to this place, where we have halted since Saturday last, and shall depart from Wills Creek to morrow.

I find there is no probability of Marching the Army from Wills Creek till the latter end of this Month, or the first of next; so that you may imagine time will hang heavy upon my hands. I meet with a familiar complaisance in this Family, especially from the General, who I hope to please without difficulty, for I may say it can scarce be done with as he uses, and requires less ceremony than you can well conceive.

I have order'd the Horse Gist to Bullskin,<sup>93</sup> and my own here, if serviceable; otherwise you must have them carr'd down when Countess is sent up: I have conceive'd a good Op'n of Gist, therefore, I hope you will not let him want for proper usage, if he sh'd be s't instead of the Greys; which will be the case if they are able to perform the Journey.

I hope you'll have frequent oppert'ys to expatiate upon the State of my Affairs, w'ch you adm'r to such degree of satisf'n to a Person in my situation. At present I have nothing to add but my comp'ts to all friends, particularly the good Family at Belvoir who I hope to hear are in good health.<sup>94</sup>

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93. Bullskin, the name of Washington's plantation in Frederick County.

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94. The Fairfax family. John Augustine Washington, the favorite brother of George Washington, was then living at Mount Vernon and taking care of the place. He became the father of Bushrod Washington, to whom George Washington transferred much of the affection he felt for John Augustine, after the latter's death.

**\*To MRS. MARY WASHINGTON**

Winchester, May 6, 1755.

Honour'd Madam: I came to this place last Saturday, and shall set out to morrow with the General for Wills Creek; where I fear we shall wait some time for a sufficient number of Waggons to transport us over the Mountains.

I am very happy in the General's Family, and I am treated with a complaisant Freedom which is quite agreeable; so that I have no occasion to doubt the satisfaction I propos'd in making the Campaigne.

As we have met with nothing yet worth relating I shall only beg my Love to my Brother's and Sister's; and Compliments to Friends.

I am, Honour'd Madam,

Yr. most Dutiful and Obedt. Son,

**\*To COLONEL AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON<sup>2</sup>**

Fort Cumberland, May 14, 1755.

Dear Brother: I left home the 24th. of last Month, and overtook the General at Frederick Town in Maryland: from whence we proceeded by slow Marches to this place; where, I fear, we shall remain sometime for want of Horses and Carriages to convey our Baggage &c. over the Mountains; but more especially for want of Forage; as it cannot be imagin'd that so many Horses as we require, will be subsisted without a great deal.

We hear nothing particular from the Ohio; only that the French are in hourly expectation of being join'd by a large body of Indians; but I fancy they will find themselves so warmly attack'd in other places, that it will [not be convenient for them to spare many.]<sup>3</sup>

I am treated with freedom, and respect, by the General and his Family; so that I don't doubt but I shall spend my time very agreeably this Campaign, tho' not advantageously; as I conceive a little experience will be my chief reward, please to give my Love to my Sister, &c. I am, Dr. Sir, etc.

This Letter was not sent.

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2. Augustine Washington was half brother to George and full brother to Lawrence. George Washington generally referred to him as Austin Washington.

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3. The phrase in brackets was inserted by Washington in 1785 after erasing that written in 1755 so completely that it can not be deciphered. The attacks on the French in other places alluded to the plans for the campaign in the northern colonies.

**\*To MAJOR JOHN CARLYLE**

Fort Cumberland, May 14, 1755.

Sir: I Overtook the General at Frederick Town in Maryl'd. and proceeded with him by way of Winchester to this place; which gave him a good oppertunity to see the absurdity of the Rout, and of Damning it very heartily. Colo. Dunbar's Regiment was also oblig'd to cross over at Connogogee and come down within 6 Miles of Winchester to take the new road up, which gave me infinite satisfaction.

We are to Halt here till forage can be brought from Philadelphia, which I suppose will introduce the Month of June upon us; and then we are to proceed upon our tremendous undertaking of transporting the heavy Artillery over the Mountains, which I believe will compose the greatest difficulty of the Campaign; For as to any apprehensions of the Enemy I think they need only to be provided against to be well regarded, as I fancy the French will be oblig'd to draw their force from the Ohio to repel the Attacks in the North, under the command of Governour Shirley &c, who will make three different attempts imediately.

I coud wish to hear what the Assembly and other's have done, and are doing, together with any occurances as may have happen'd since my departure.

I am in very great want of Boots, and have desir'd my Bror. Jno. to purchase a pair and send them to you, who I hope will contrive them to me, by the first oppertunity. I have wrote to my old corrispondant Mrs. Carlyle and must beg my Compliments to my good Friend Dalton,<sup>97</sup> &c. I am &c.

NB. This Letter was never sent.

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97. John Dalton, of Alexandria.

**\*To MRS. JOHN CARLYLE<sup>95</sup>**

Fort Cumberland, May 14, 1755.

Dear Madam: As I have no higher expectation in view than an intimate corrispondance with my Friends, I hope, in that, I shall not be disappointed; especially by you and Mrs. Fairfax, who was pleas'd (tho. seldom) to honour me with yours last time.<sup>96</sup>

We arrived here the 10th., and for ought I know may Halt till the loth. of next Month, before we receive Waggon's &c. to transport our Baggage and Horses to the Aligany.

We have no news in the Camp to entertain you with at present, but I hope to be furnish'd with some thing agreeable against my next, when I shall not fail to communicate it: Interim, I am Dr. Madam Yr. most Obedt. etc.

This Letter was not sent.

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95. Mrs. John Carlyle (Sarah Fairfax, sister-in-law of Sarah Cary, Mrs. George William Fairfax).

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96. When Washington marched toward the Ohio in 1754.

**\*To JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Fort Cumberland, May 14, 1755.

Dear Brother: As wearing Boots is quite the Mode, and mine in a declining State; I must beg the favour of you to procure me a pair that is good, and neat, and send them to Major Carlyle, who I hope will contrive them as quick as my necessity requires.

I see no prospect of moving from this place; as we have neither Horses nor Waggons enough, and no forage for them to subsist upon but what is expected from Philadelphia; therefore, I am well convinced that the trouble and difficulty we must encounter in passing the Mountain for want of proper conveniences, will equal all the other Interruptions of the Campaign; for I conceive the March of such a Train of Artillery in these Roads to be a tremendous undertaking: As to any danger from the Enemy I look upon it as trifling, for I believe they will be oblig'd to exert their utmost Force to repel the attacks to the Northward, where Governour Shirley and other's with a body of 8,000 Men, wall annoy their Settlements, and attempt their Forts.

The Gen'l. has appointed me one of his aids de Camps,<sup>99</sup> in which Character I shall serve this Campaign, agreeably enough, as I am thereby freed from all commands but his, and give Order's to all, which must be implicitly obey'd.

I have now a good opportunity, and shall not neglect it, of forming an acquaintance, which may be serviceable hereafter, if I can find it worth while pushing my Fortune in the Military way.



I have wrote to my two female corrispondents<sup>1</sup> by this oppertunity, one of which Letters I have inclos'd to you, and beg y'r. deliverance off. I shall expect a Succinct acc't of all that has happened since my departure.

I am, dear Jack, etc.

The above Letter was not sent.

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99. This appointment was proclaimed to the troops in general orders of May 10.

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1. Mrs. Carlyle and Mrs. Fairfax, who were sisters-in-law.

**\*To MRS. GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX**

Fort Cumberland, May 14, 1755.

Dear Madam: I have at last, with great pains and difficulty, discovered the Reason why Mrs. Wardrope is a greater favourite of Genl. Braddock's than Mrs. Fairfax; and met with more respect at the late review in Alexandria.

The cause I shall communicate, after rallying you for neglecting the means that introduced her to his favour which to say truth were in [ ? ] a present of delicious Cake, and potted Wood cocks; that wrought such wonders [ ? ] upon the Heart of the General [ ? ] as upon those of the gentlemen that they became instant Admirers, not only the charms, but the Politeness of this Fair Lady.

We have a favourable prospect of halting here three Weeks or a Month longer for Waggons, Horses and Forage; so that it is easy to conceive my situation will be very pleasant and agreeable, when I dreaded this (before I came out) more than every other Incident that might happen in the Campaigne.

I hope you will favour me with your corrispondance since you see my willing desirousness[ ? ] to deserve the Honour, and of approving myself Your most Obedt. and most Humble Servt.<sup>98</sup>

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98. The bracketed query marks denote a word or words so crossed over or erased by Washington, 30 years after writing this letter, as to be indecipherable. The word "desirousness," in the last paragraph, is a doubtful reading, though the first two syllables are correct.

## MEMORANDUM

The 15th. of May I was sent to Colo. Hunter<sup>4</sup> for a supply of Money of 4,000 £ Sterling and arriv'd as far as Winchester, on my way thither the day following, from whence I dispatch'd an express to him (fearing he might be out) to provide that sum, and meet me at Williamsburgh with it, and proceeded myself thro Fairfax where I was detained a Day in getting Horses.

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4. Col. John Hunter, of Hampton, and paymaster general of Braddock's forces.

### **\*To JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Winchester, May 28, 1755.

Dear Jack: I came to this place last Night, and was greatly disappointed at not finding the Cavalry according to promise; I am oblig'd to wait till it does arrive, or till I can procure a Guard from the Militia, either of which I suppose will detain me two days; as you may, with almost equal success, attempt to raize the Dead to life again, as the force of this County; and that from Wills Creek cannot be expected in less than the forementioned time without they are now upon their March.

The Droughth in this County, if possible, exceeds what we see below; so that, it is very reasonably conjectur'd they won't make Corn to suffice the People; and as for Tobacco, they decline all thoughts of making any.

The Inhabitants of this place abound in News, but as I apprehend it is founded upon as much truth as some I heard in my way down, I think it advisable to forego the recital till a little better authority confirms the report, and then you may expect to have a succinct acct.

I shou'd be glad to hear you live Harmony and good fellowship with the family at Belvoir, as it is in their power to be very serviceable upon many occassion's to us, as young beginner's. I wou'd advise your visiting often as one step towards it; the rest, if any more is necessary, your own good sense will sufficient

dictate; for to that Family I am under many obligations, particularly to the old Gentleman.<sup>8</sup>

Mrs. Fairfax and Mrs. Spearing<sup>9</sup> express'd an inclination to hear whether I liked [ ? ]<sup>10</sup> this place (with my charge safe), you may therefore acquaint them that I met with no other Interruption than the difficulty of gettg. Horses after I found her's for want of Shoes grew lame, I was oblig'd to get a fresh horse every 15 or 20 Miles, which render'd the journey tiresome. I shou'd have receiv'd greater relief from the fatigues of my journey, and my time wou'd have been spent much more agreeably, had I halted below, rather than at this vile post but I little imagin'd I shou'd have occasion to wait for a Guard who ought to have waited for me; if either must have waited at all.

I have given Colo. Fairfax an Order upon you for £8:17:5 which please to pay, as it is on acct. of a horse w'ch I bought of Neale sometime ago. You will receive, Inclos'd, Bowce's receipt for Harry; and I shou'd be glad, if you have any oppertunity, that you wou'd demand my Bond which I had given, and cou'd not receive at [ ? ]<sup>11</sup> of the money; this receipt you may put into my receipt draw. My Compliments attend my Friends who I wish health and happiness to, very sincerely; I am Dear Jack, your most Affectionate Brother

P.S. As I undersand your County is to be divided, and that Mr. Alexander intends to decline serving it, I shou'd be glad if you cou'd fish at Colo. Fairfax's Intentions, and let me know whether he purposes to offer himself a Candidate; If he does not I shou'd be glad to stand a poll, if I thought my chance tolerably good. Majr. Carlyle mention'd it to me in Williamsburg in a bantering way and asked how I shou'd like to go, saying at the same time, he did not know but they might send me when I knew nothing of the matter, for one or t'other of the Counties. I must own I shou'd like to go for either in that manner, but more particularly for Fairfax, as I am a resident there.

I shou'd be glad if you cou'd discover Major Carlyles real sentim'ts also those of Mr. Dalton, Ramsay, Mason,<sup>12</sup> &c. w'ch I hope and think you may with't disclosing much of mine; as I know y'r own good sense can furnish you with means enough without letting it proceed immediately from me. If you do any thing in this pray let me know by the first oppertunity how you have succeeded in it; and how those Gentlemen stand affected; if they seem inclinable to promote my Interest, and things shou'd be drawing to a crisis you then may declare my Intentions and beg their assistance. If on the Contrary you find them more inclin'd to favour some other, I w'd have the Affair entirely dropped.

Parson Green's and Captn. McCarty's<sup>13</sup> Interests in this wou'd be of Consequence; and I shou'd be glad if you cou'd sound their Pulse upon the occasion; Conduct the whole till you are satisfied of the Sentim'ts of those I have mention'd, with an air of Indifference and unconcern; after that you may

regulate your conduct accordingly. Captn. West<sup>14</sup> the present Burgess, and our Friend Jack West, cou'd also be serviceable if they had a mind to assist the Interest of Dear Jack Your loving Brother.<sup>15</sup>

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8. Hon. William Fairfax.

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9. Mrs. Ann Spearing, one of the signers of the well-known, sprightly letter of welcome that went from Belvoir to Washington on his return from the Monongahela.

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10. Thirty years later the change was made to "express'd a wish to be informed of the time and manner of my reaching this place."

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11. The later change was "at the time I paid the money."

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12. John Dalton, William Ramsay, and Thomson (?) Mason, of Fairfax.

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13. Rev. Charles Green, minister of Truro Parish, and Capt. Daniel McCarty, who lived near Pohick.

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14. Capt. John West, who was with Washington at Great Meadows and had succeeded to his brother Hugh West's seat in the House of Burgesses when Hugh died in 1754. Jack West was John West, jr.

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15. A further bit of information as to this Fairfax election is furnished by Adam Stephen's letter of December 23: "Such a spirit to revenge and indignation prevaild here, upon hearing you were insulted at the Fairfax election, that we were all ready and violent to run and tear your enemies to pieces...it would have been far better to have acquainted me with your intention of standing candidate for Frederick, my acquaintance there is very general...that with a weeks notice...you would have gone unanimously, in the mean time I think your poll was not despicable as the people were a stranger to your purpose, untill the election began." The election was held December 11, and a poll list, in Washington's writing, in the Washington Papers, does not mention his own name but gives those who voted for Capt. John West, who was elected with 252 votes, Col. George William Fairfax, 222 votes, and William Elzey, 224. There is also an undated poll list for Frederick County, in the *Washington Papers* (but not in Washington's writing), which gives the result of the vote as Hugh West, 271; Thomas Swearingen, 270; and Washington, 40.

#### **\*To WILLIAM FAIRFAX**

Camp at Wills Creek, June 7, 1755.

Honble. Sir: I arriv'd with my charge safe in Camp the 30th. of last Month, after waiting a Day and a piece in Winchester expecting the Calvalry to Escort me up; in which I was Disappointed, and oblig'd to make use of a small Guard of the Militia of Frederick.

The General, by frequent breaches of Contracts, has lost all degree of patience; and for want of that consideration and moderation which shou'd be used by a Man of Sense upon these occassion's, will I fear, represent us [ ? ]<sup>19</sup> in a light we little deserve; for instead of blameing the Individuals as he ought, he charges all his Disappointments to a publick Supineness; and looks upon the Country, I believe, as void of both Honour and Honesty; we have frequent disputes on this head, which are maintained with warmth on both sides, especially on his, who is incapable of Arguing with't; or giving up any point he asserts, let it be ever so incompatible with Reason.<sup>20</sup>

There is a Line of Communication to be open'd from Pensylvania to the French Fort Duquisne, along w'ch we are to receive, after a little time, all our Convoys of Provisions, &c.; and to give all manner of encouragement to a People who ought rather to be chastis'd for their insensibility of their own danger, and disobedience of their Sovereign's expectation. They are to be the choosen people because they have furnished what their absolute Interest alone induced them to do, that is 150 Waggon's, and an Equivalent number of horses.<sup>21</sup>

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19. One word erased.

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20. The governors of the different colonies had promised much, but performed little; and the large deposits of supplies supposed to exist were soon found wanting, or in places where they could be of no service, and no means at hand to transport them to the army. It was at one of these crises that Franklin rendered such efficient aid. (See Franklin's *Works* (Bigelow edition), vol. 2, p. 419.) For 200 miles the troops marched with only salt provisions, and the general was forced to offer large rewards to such as would bring to the camp provisions, paying a higher price than was usual for whatever could be obtained. In one case some salted beef was condemned on its arrival in camp as unfit for food. The horses were stolen almost as fast as they could be obtained. The contractors failed to supply what they had contracted for, and Cresap lost his position as commissary through his gross negligence. On the other hand, General Braddock did not hesitate to enlist and take away servants and impress wagons, horses, teamsters, and even carriages and carriage horses.— *Ford*.

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21. These remarks are applied to the Pennsylvanians, who were singularly backward in rendering any aids for the public service. The merit of procuring the wagons and horses, here mentioned, was wholly due to Franklin, and not to any agency or intention of the assembly. Being at that time postmaster general in the Colonies, he visited General Braddock at Frederick Town for the purpose of maturing a plan for transmitting dispatches between the general and the governors. Becoming acquainted with the obstacles which opposed the progress of the army, he stipulated with General Braddock to furnish within a given time 150 wagons and a proportionable number of horses, for which a specified sum was to be allowed. He immediately returned to York and Lancaster, sent out an advertisement among the farmers, and in two weeks all the wagons and horses were in readiness at Wills Creek. He gave his personal security that the compensation agreed on should be duly paid according to contract.— *Sparks*.

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22. Two paragraphs omitted here are nearly a verbatim repetition of what Washington wrote to John Augustine Washington, June 7, *post*.

General Innis has accepted of a Commission to be Governour of Cumberland Fort, where he is to reside, and will shortly receive another to be hangman, or something of that kind.

By a Letter from Governor Morris we have advice, that a party of three hund'd Men pass'd Oswego on their way to Fort Duquisne, and that another and larger Detachment was expected to pass that place every moment. By the Publick acct. from Pennsylvania we are assur'd that 900 Men has certainly pass'd Oswego, to reinforce the French on Ohio, so that from the acct. we have reason to believe we shall have more to do than go up the Hills to come Down again.

We are impatient to hear what the power's at home are doing; whether Peace or war is like to be the event of all these Preparations. I am Honble. Sir etc.

**\*To GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX**

Camp at Wills Creek, June 7, 1755.

Sir: I had not the pleasure of receiving your favour till after my return from Williamsburg, when it was not in my power to be so serviceable in the affair of your Horses, as I cou'd wish; for they were sent out with a Detachment of 500 Men a few days before. I made immediate enquiry, and application for them; and believe I shall be able, notwithstanding our g't want of Horses, to procure their liberty when we come up with the Detachment; but when that will be, or in what order you may receive them, I can't absolutely say; for we are inform'd, they have kill'd some of their Horses

outright, and disabled others, for which Reason I think it wou'd be too great to expect your's will escape the calamitys that befall those of other's: They are apprais'd (as I saw by one of the Waggon-Master's Books') to £16 the two; which with your Servant Simpson, is all that I can understand is here, belonging to you.

As I have taken this oppertunity of writing to Colo. Fairfax, and being just at this time a good deal hurried, which prevents me from enlargeing so fully as I otherwise wou'd, I shall beg to refer you to him for what little News is stirring in the Camp: please to make my Compliments to all Friends who think me worthy of their enquirys. I am etc.

**\* To MRS. MARY WASHINGTON**

Camp at Wills Creek, June 7, 1755.

Honour'd Madam: I was favour'd with yours by Mr. Dick, and am sorry it is not in my power to provide you with either a Dutch man, or the Butter as you desire, for we are quite out of that part of the Country where either are to be had, as there are few or no Inhabitants where we now lie Encamp'd, and butter cannot be had here to supply the wants of the Camp.

I was sorry it was not in my power to call upon you as I went to, or came from Williamsburg to'ther Day, which I shou'd have done if the business I went upon, which was for money, wou'd have suffer'd me to have made an hour's delay.

I hope you will spend the chief part of your time at Mount Vernon as you say, where I am certain everything will be order'd as much for your satisfaction as possible, in the Situation we are in.

There is a Detachment of 500 Men March'd from this towards the Aligany, to prepare the Roads &c. and it is imagin'd the main body will move now in abt. 5 days time.

As nothing else that is remarkable, occur's to me, I shall conclude, after begging my love and Compliments to all Friends Dear Madam Yr. Most Affect. and Dutiful Son

**\*To MAJOR JOHN CARLYLE**

Fort Cumberland, June 7, 1755.



Dear Sir: I take this opportunity, as it is the last I can expect before we leave this place, of enquiring after your health, which I hope is greatly amended since I saw you in Williamsburg. I have not time, as we are now very much hurried, to communicate very particularly the little News that is stirring in the Camp; from whence, before I arriv'd, was Detach'd a body of 500 Men under the Command of Major Chapman and the Quarter-master General, who are to prepare the Roads and lay a Deposit of Provision's at the Little Meadows; where they are to Erect some kind of Defensive Work to secure our convoys. To morrow Sir Peter Halkett with the first Brigade March off and abt. the Monday following the Genl. and the 2d. will move from hence. We have no certain accts. of the French on Ohio; but have advises by Letter from Governor Morris that a Body of three hund'd past Oswego, and that a still larger body was hourly expected; so that I apprehend we shall not take possession of Fort Duquisne so quietly as was imagin'd.

The Inclos'd is to my good Friend Mrs. Carlyle, who I hope will not suffer our former corrispondance to drop; my Sincere wishes and Compliments attends all enquiring Friends: and I am, etc.

**\*To MRS. JOHN CARLYLE**

Camp at Wills Creek, June 7, 1755.

Dear Madam: As I have no higher expectation in view than an intimate Corrispondance with my Friends, I hope in that I shall not be disappointed; especially by you and Mrs. Fairfax, who was pleas'd (tho' seldom) to honour me with your's last time a year.

I arriv'd here in tolerable health tho something fatigued with the Journey; and found Sir Jno. St. Clair was Detach'd with 500 Men to amend the Roads, that the main body might pass with the greater ease who I suppose will be all in motion by Tuesday next.

Please to make my Compliments agreeable to Mrs. Spearing who has my most sincere and hearty wishes for every thing her heart can desire. I am Dear Madam etc.

**To MRS. GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX**

Fort Cumberland at Willes Creek, June 7, 1755.

Dear Madam: When I had the pleasure to see you last, you express'd an Inclination to be informed of my safe arrival at Camp with the charge that was entrusted to my care; but at the same time desir'd

it might be communicated in a Letter to some body of your acquaintance. This I took as a Gentle rebuke and polite manner of forbidding me corresponding with you and conceive this opinion is not illy founded when I sifted it thus. I have hither to found it impracticable to engage one moment of your attention. If I am right in this I hope you will excuse my present presumption and lay the imputation to lateness at my successful arrival. If on the contrary these are fearfull apprehensions only, how easy is it to remove my suspicion, enliven my [ ? ],<sup>23</sup> and make me happier than the Day is long, by honouring me with a corrispondance which you did once partly promise.

Please to make my Complts. to Miss Hannah,<sup>24</sup> and to Mr. Bryan<sup>25</sup> to whom I shall do myself the pleasr. of writing so soon as I hear he is return'd from Westmoreland.

I am Madam Your most Obedt. etc.

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23. Indecipherable; the later change was "dull hours," which appears to be what was written in 1755, but will the addition of an extra word or two.

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24. Hannah Fairfax. She later became the second wife of Warner Washington, first cousin to George.

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25. Bryan Fairfax, who became the eighth Lord Fairfax. He was a half brother of George William Fairfax, and was four years younger than George Washington. A lieutenant in the Virginia Regiment, he experienced a religious conviction which later carried him into the ministry. He lived with his first wife, Elizabeth Caty, daughter of Col. Wilson Cary, of Ceelys, at Towlston Grange in the vicinity of Difficult Run, Fairfax County. In 1778 he attempted to bring about peace between the States and Great Britain, but failed and, finding he could not conscientiously take the British oath, returned to Virginia and died there. He lived long after the close of the Revolution and helped organize the Episcopal Church in Virginia after the war. His first wife died in 1778, and he married Jane, daughter of John Donaldson, of Fairfax, in 1780. The latter part of his life was spent at Mount Eagle, which he built near Alexandria.

### **\*To JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Camp at Will's Creek, June 7, 1755.

Dear Jack: As much hurried as I am at present, I can't think of leaving this place without writing to you; tho' I have no time to be particular. I was Escorted by 8 Men of the Militia from Winchester to this place; which 8 Men were 2 Days assembling; but I believe they wou'd not have been more than

as many seconds dispersing if I had been attacked. Upon arrival here, I found Sir Jno. St. Clair<sup>26</sup> with a body of 500 Men were March'd to prepare the Roads, lay a deposit of Provisions at the little Meadows, and to erect some kind of defensive work there.

To morrow Sir Peter<sup>27</sup> with the first Brigade, begin their March, and on Monday the General and the 2d. will follow. We have no certain acct. from the Ohio: but have advices from Philadelphia that a body of 300 F. pass'd Oswego on their way to Fort Duquisne, and that a larger Detachment was hourly expected. A Capt'n. of Sir Peter's Regim't with several of the common Soldiers of the different Corps has died since our Incampm't here, and many others are now sick with a kind of bloody Flux. I wrote from Winchester a Letter which I hope you have receiv'd and shou'd be glad of an answer as soon as possible; any Letter's to me, directed to the care of Mr. Cox,<sup>28</sup> at Winchester, will be certain of a conveyance I am Dr. Jack Yr. most Affe. Brother

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26. St. Clair commanded a regiment and was Braddock's quartermaster general; he was wounded at the Monongahela.

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27. Killed at the Monongahela.

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28. William Cooke, Cocks, or Cox, of Winchester, whose house Washington afterwards occupied while in command on the Virginia frontier.

### **\*To MR. BELFOUR**

Winchester, May 16, 1755.

Sir: If Colo. [Hunter] sh'd. be from home, I hope you will open this Letter to see and attend to the contents, that you may dispatch a Messenger to him immediately, to prevent his trouble in getting the 10 or 15 Th'd. Pounds ment'd. in a former Letter but repair immediately to W'msburg with the 4,000 L, which is all I am to receive at pres't. I am Sir, etc.

### **\*To JOHN HUNTER**

Winchester, May 16, 1755.

Sir: I have Orders from the Gen'l. and Instructions from Mr. Johnston,<sup>5</sup> to receive 4,000£ Stlg. at the rate of £4:0:7¼ pr. Oz., which will suffice for the present contingencies.

I have therefore dispatched this express with order's to make all imaginable haste to you, who I am told will immediately repair to Wmsburg. with the Money, and pay it there, according to contract. I must beg your utmost diligence in this affair as I have Order's not to wait, because the whole Army will halt at Wills Creek till I return, at an immense expence.

I have Letter's from the Gen'l. and Paymaster, with Bills and proper Instruction's; all of which I shall deliver when I have the pleasure of meeting you, which I expect will be in Williamsburg on Wednesday next, as I am now upon my way down, and shall delay no time. I am, &c.

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5. John Johnston.

### **\*MEMORANDUM**

May 30, [1755.]

Upon my return from Williamsburg I found Sir Jno. St. Clair, with Majr. Chapman and a Detachm't of 500 Men were gone on to the Little Meadows in ord'r to prepare the Roads, erect a small Fort, and to lay a Deposit of Provision's there. The 2d. of June Mr. Spindelowe discover'd a communication from Fort Cumberland to the Old Road leadg. to the Aligany with't xing those Enormous Mountains which had prov'd so prijuducial to our Waggon Horses. This intercourse was open'd by the branch of Wills Creek, by the 7th. when Sir Peter Halkett with the first Brigade of the Line, began their March, and Incamp'd within a mile of the old Road; which is abt. 5 Miles from the Fort the same day. This Encampment was first called by the Name of the Grove but afterwards altered to that of Spindelowe's Camp.<sup>16</sup>

This day also, Captn. Gates's<sup>17</sup> Independant Compy., the remaining Companies of the Provincial Troops, and the whole Park of Artillery, were order'd to hold themselves in readiness to March at an hour's warng. under the Comd. of Lieut. Colo. Burton:<sup>18</sup> which they accordingly did the 9th followg.; but with g't difficulty got up to Sir Peter Halkett's Brigade; the difficulty arising in this March by too gt. a number of Waggon's was the occasion of a Council being called so soon as the General arriv'd (with Colo. Dunbar's Regim't.) the same day; In which Council it was determin'd to retrench the number of Waggon's and increase the pack Loads for Horses; in order thereto, the Officer's were call'd together,

and the Genl. represented to them the necessity there was to procure all the Horses it was possible for his Majesty's Service; advis'd them to send back such of thier Baggage as they cou'd do with't and apply the Horses which by that means wou'd become spar'd

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16. In Maryland.

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17. Horatio Gates, later major general in the Continental Army.

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18. Burton died of wounds received at the Monongahela; he commanded the Forty-eighth Foot.

to carry provisions for the Army, which was accordingly done with great cheerfulness and zeal.

**\*To JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Camp at George's Creek, June 14, 1755.

Dear Jack: I received your's of the 8th. Instant from Fredericksburg and am sorry to find that Allan is become importunate for a Debt of so short standing; but it is the way of the World, therefore not to be wonder'd at.

I am pleas'd to find you have a prospect of settling that affair with Patrick Kendrick, and shou'd be very glad to hear you entertain'd hopes of discovering my young Mare, as I had conceiv'd high expectation's of her. My negro's Cloathes I hope you will take care to get in time, and employ Cleo's leisure hour's in mak'g them. I am exceedingly rejoiced that Tobo. is likely to keep up its price, and doubt not but you'll endeavour to make the most of mine, and of every thing else I have entrusted to your care; as you know, and what entire confidence I repose in your managem't.<sup>29</sup>

I receiv'd a Letter yesterday from my Broth'r. Saml. who desires a division of our deep run tract this Fall, which is very agreeable to me and I will abide by any settlement you shall make on my behalf<sup>30</sup>

As I have wrote to you twice since the first Inst I shall only add that the difficulty's arising in our March from havg. a number of Waggon's will, I fear, prove insurmountable unless some scheme can be fallen upon to retrench the Waggon's, and increase the no. of Bat Horses which is what I recommended at first, and I believe, is now found to be the most salutary means of transporting our Provision's and Stores to Ohio. I am, Dr. Jack, Yr. &c.

P.S. I have been able to procure Townshend Washington a Comn. to be assistant Comy. with pay at 5/ Sterg. pr. Day and Anthony Strother<sup>31</sup> a pair of Colour's in Colo. Dunbar's Regiment.

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29. John Augustine Washington was then managing Mount Vernon for George Washington.

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30. Deep Run land, on the Rappahannock above Fredericksburg, a part of the estate left by Augustine Washington, father of George and Samuel.

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31. Anthony Strother, sr., one of the witnesses of Augustine Washington's will, acknowledged this appointment in a letter of July 9, 1755, which is in the *Washington Papers*. Strother's daughter Sarah became the grandmother of President Zachary Taylor.

### **\*To SAMUEL WASHINGTON**

Camp, at George's-Creek, June 14, 1755.

Dr. Saml: I received your's of the 27th. of May, and assure you that nothing is more agreeable to me than to have our Deep run Tract divided; nor nothg. is more agreeable than for my Brothr. Jno. to act on my behalf, whose conduct in the affair I shall abide by: so that you have nothing more to do but consult with him about the time, and endeavour to get it done upon as cheap terms as possible.

I am excessively hurried, therefore have not time to be particular in informing you of the occurencies that have, or may happen; we have got thus far, and shall continue on to Fort Duquisne; where, I hope the dispute will soon be decided, and then I shall be able to give you a more particular acct. pray make my Compts. to my Sister and to Colo. Champes<sup>32</sup> Family

I am Dr. Saml. Yr. &c.

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32. Col. John Champe, of King George County.

### **\*To JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Gt. Xing. on the Yaugh., June 28, 1755.

Dear Jack: Immediately upon our leav'g the C. at George's Cr'k the 14th Inst. (from wh'e I wrote to you) I was seiz'd with viol't Fevers and Pns. in my h'd w'ch con'd w'out the l't. Intermisn. till the 23 foll'g when I was reliev'd by the Genls. absol'y ordering the Phy'ns to give me Doctr. Ja's Powder, w'ch is the most excel't mede. in the W'd for it gave me immed. ease, and removed my Fev'rs and other comp'ts in 4 Days time.<sup>33</sup> My illness was too violent to suffer me to ride, therefore I was indebted to a cover'd Waggon for some part of my Transp'n; but even in this I c'd not cont'e for the jolt'g was so g't that I was left upon the Road with a Guard and necess'rys, to wait the Arr'l of Colo. Dunbar's Detach. wh'h was 2 days M. behind. The Genl. giving me his w'd of hon'r that I sh'd be brought up before he reach'd the French Fort; this promise, and the Doctr's threats that if I persever'd it wou'd endanger my Life, determin'd my halting for the above Detach't.

As I expect the Comn. bet'n this and Wills Ck. will soon be too dangerous for single persons to pass, it will possibly stop the interc'e of Letters in any measure; therefore I shall attempt (and will go through if I have strength) to give you an acct. of my proceedings, of our situation, and of our prospects at present; which I desire you may com'e to Colo. Fairfax, and my Corrsp'ds, for I am too weak to write more than this Letter. In the L'r wh'ch I wrote fr'm Georges C'k, I acq'd you that unless the numb'r of Wag'ns were retrenched and the carry'g Hs. in cr'd that we never sh'd be able to see Duquisne: this, in 2 Days afterwards (w'ch was abt. the time they got to the little Meadows with some of their F. Waggons and strongest Teams, they themselves were convinced off,

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33. From June 17 to July 8 Washington was kept in the rear of the army by this illness. Robert James was a schoolfellow of Samuel Johnson and author of a medicinal dictionary in three folio volumes. "I never thought well of Dr James's compounded medicines," was Johnson's opinion. These famous fever powders were sold by Newbury, Goldsmith's publisher.

for they found that beside the almost impos'y of gett'g the wag'ns along at all; that they had often a rear of 3 or 4 miles of Waggons; and that the Sold'rs Guarding them were so dispersed that if we had been attack'd either in Front, Center, or Rear the part so attack'd must have been cut off and totally dispersed before they cou'd be properly sustained by any other Corps.

At the little Mead'ws there was a 2d. Council call'd, for there had been one before wherein it was represented to all the Off'rs of the diff't Corps the gr. necessity there was for Hs. and how laudable it wd. be to retrench their Baggage and offer the spare Hs. for the Publick Service. In order to encourage this I gave up my best Horse, (w'ch I have nev'r h'd of since) and took no more baggage than half my Portmanteau w'd easily cont'n. It was also sd. that the numb'r were to be lessen'd;<sup>34</sup> but there was only from 210 or 12, to 200 w'ch had no perceivable difference.



The Genl. before they met in Council ask'd my priv'e Opin'n concern'g the Exp'n. I urg'd it in the warmest terms I was Master off, to push on; if we even did it with a chos'n Detacht. for that purpose, with the Artillery and such other things as were absolutely necessary; leav'g the baggage and other Con voys with the Remainder of the Army, to follow by slow and regular Marches, which they might do safely, while we were advanced in Front. As one Reason to support this Opinion, I inform'd the [Genl.] if we c'd cred't our Intelligence, the French were weak at the Forks but hourly expect'd reinf'ts, w'ch to my certain knowledge cou'd not arrive with Pro'vns or any Supplies dur'g the continuance of the Droughth as the Buffalo River down w'ch is their only comm'n to Venango, must be as Dry as we now f'd the g't xing of the Youghe., w'ch may be pass'd dry shod. This was a Scheme that took, and it was det'd that the Genl. with 1200 chosen Men and Officers of all the differ't Corps, with the following Field Officer's (viz,; Sr. Pet'r Halkett who acts as Brigadier, Lt. Colo. Gage, Lt. C. Burton, and Majr. Sparke, with such a certain number of Waggons as the

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34. Washington clarified this by his 1784–85 correction: "It is said however that the numbrs, reduced by this 2d. attempt was only from 210 or 12, to 200."

Train w'd absolutely require, shou'd March as soon as things cou'd be got in readiness for them, which was compleated, and we on our March by the 19th, leav'g Colo. Dunbar and Majr. Chapman, with the residue of the two Reg's, Companys most of the women and in short every thing behind except such Provision's and other necessary's as we took and carried upon Horses.

We set out with less than 30 Carriages (Incl'g all those that transported the Howetzers, 12 prs. and 6 p'rs., etc.), and all of those strongly Horsed; which was a prospect that convey'd the most infinite delight to me tho' I was excessively ill at the time. But this prospect was soon over turn'd and all my sanguine hopes brought very low when I found, that instead of pushing on with vigour, without regarding a little rough Road, they were halting to level every Mold Hill, and to erect Bridges over every Brook; by which means we were 4 Days gett'g 12 Miles; where I was left by the Doct'r's Advice and the Genl's absolute Orders, otherwise I wou'd not have been prevailed upon to remain behind my own Detach't as I then imagin'd, and believ'd I shall now find it not very easy to join my own Corps again, which is 25 Miles advance'd before us; tho' I had the Genls. word of Hon'r pledg'd in the most solemn manner, that I sh'd be b't up before he arrived at Duquisne. They have had frequent Alarms, and several Men scalp'd; but this is only done to retard the March, and to harass the Men if they are to be turn'd out every time a small party of them attack the Guards at Night; (for I am certain, they have not sufficient strength to make head against the whole.

I have been now 6 Days with Colo. Dunbar's Corps, who are in a miserable Condition for want of Horses, not hav'g more one half enough for their Wag'ns; so that the only method he has of proceedings, is to March

on himself with as many Waggons as those will draw, and then Halt till the Remainder are brought up which requires two Days more; and I believe shortly he will not be able to stir at all; but there has been vile management in regard to Horses and while I am mention'g this, I must not forget to desire, that you'll acq't Colo. G. Fx. that I have made the most strick enquiry after his Man and Horses, but can hear nothing of either; at least nothing that can be credited. I was told that the Fellow was taken ill upon the Road while he was with Sr. Jno. St. Clair's Detacht. the certainty of this I can't answer for, but I believe there is nothing more cert'n than that he is not with any part of the Army. And unless the Horses stray and make home themselves, I believe there is 1000 to 1 against his ever seeing them again: for I gave up a horse only one Day, and never cou'd see or hear of him afterwards: My strength wont admit me to say more, tho' I have not said half what I intended con'g our Aff'rs here. Business, I shall not think of, but dep'd solely upon your man't. of all my aff'rs, and doubt not but that they will be well conducted. You may thank my f'ds for the Lett'rs I have rec'd w'ch has not been one from any Mortal since I left Fairfax, except yourself and Mr. Dalton. It is a piece of regard and kindness which I sh'd end'r to acknow'e was I able and suffer'd to write. All your Letters to me I w'd have you send to Mr. Cocks of Winchester or to Govr. Innis at Fort Cumberland, and then you may be cert'n of their com'g safe to hand otherwise I can't say as much. Make my Complim'ts to all who think me worthy of their Enquirys.

P.S. July 2d. A Great Misfortune has attended me in my sickness was, the looseing the use of my Servant, for poor Jno.<sup>35</sup> was taken abt. the same time that I was, with near the same disorder; and was confin'd as long; so that we did not see each other for several Days. he is also tolerably well recover'd. We are sure advan'd almost as far as the g't Meadows; and I shall set out to morrow morning for my own Corps, with an Escort of 100 Men which is to guard some Provision's up; so that my Fears and doubts on that head are quite remov'd. I had a Letter yesterday from Orme, who writes me word that they have pass'd the Youghyangane for the last time, that they have sent out Partys to scour the Country thereabouts and have Reason to believe that the French are greatly alarm'd at their approach.

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35. John Alton.

**\*To ROBERT ORME**

Great Crossing, June 30, 1755.

Dear Orme: I came to this Camp on thursday last, with the Rear of Colo. Dunbar's Detach't and shou'd have continued on with his Front, to day, but was prevented by Rain.

My Fevers are very moderate, and I hope are near a Crisis; when I shall have nothing to encounter but excessive weakness, and the difficulty in getting to you; which I wou'd not fail in doing ere you reach Duquisne, for 500£, but I have no doubt of doing this, as the General has given me his word and honour, in the most solemn manner.

As the Doct'r thinks it imprudent for me to use much exercise for 2 or 3 days, it will prevent my coming up; therefore, I shou'd be glad to be advised of your Marches from Gist's, and how you are likely to get on, for you may rest asured that Colo. Dunbar cannot get from his present Incampment<sup>36</sup> in less than two or three Days; and I believe really, it will be as much as he possibly can do to reach the Meadows at all; so that you will be greatly avanc'd before us. I am too weak to add more than my Comp'ts to the Genl., Family, &c. and again to desire that you will oblige me in the above request, and advise the most effectual means for me to join you, I am Dr. Orme, etc.

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36. Colonel Dunbar had advanced 7 miles beyond the Great Meadows, which was the position of his camp at the time of the action. Here he remained till he was met by General Braddock and his flying troops after the defeat at the Monongahela, when he destroyed his baggage and speedily retreated with the whole army to Fort Cumberland.— *Sparks*.

**\*To COLONEL JAMES INNES**

Camp between the Gt. xing and Meadows, July 2, 1755.

Dear Sir: I shou'd take it infinitely kind, if you w'd be good enough to dispatch, by the first safe oppertunitys, after they come to hand, any Letters that you may receive either to, or from me; for I have been greatly surprised at not receiving any Letter's from my Friends since I came out; and must impute it to miscarriage, somewhere, for, I am certain it cannot be owing to their not writing.

I have been excessively ill, but am now recovering from violent Fevers and Pains, of w'ch my disorder consisted.

The Doctor's forbid me writing as very injurious to my health; therefore I cannot have the pleasure of giving you a particular acct. of our situation, &c. but I shall refer you to Mr. Caton, who has had an opportunity of seeing the whole. I am etc.

**\*MEMORANDUM**

[July 9, 1755.]

The 8th of July I rejoined (in a covered Waggon) the advanced division of the Army under the immediate Com'd of the General. On the 9th I attended him on horse back tho' very weak and low. On this day he was attacked and defeated by a party of French and Indians adjudged not to exceed 300. When all hope of rallying the dismayed troops and recovering the ground, our provisions and stores being given up I was ordered to Dunbar's Camp.<sup>37</sup>

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37. This note was added by Washington to the 1755 "Letter Book" in 1785.

**\*To COLONEL JAMES INNES<sup>38</sup>**

Little Meadows, July 15, 1755.

Sir: Capt'n. Orme being confined to his Litter and not well able to write, has desir'd me to acknowledge the receipt of your's; He begs the favour of you to have the room that the Gen'l. lodg'd in prepar'd for Colo. Burton, himself, and Capt. Morris, who are all wounded; also, that some small place may be had where convenient for Cooking; and, that if any fresh Provn. and other suitable necessarys for persons in their infirm condition, may be had, that you will be kind enough to engage it. He also begs, that, you will order the present w'ch was sent by Governour Morris to the Genl. and his Family, into the care of Mr. A. le Roy, the Steward, who is sent on for that, and other purposes. The Horses, that carry the wounded Gent'n. in Litters are so much fatigued that we dread their performance, therefore, it is desir'd that you will be kind enough to send out 8 or 10 fresh horses for their relief, which will enable us to reach the Fort this Evening. I doubt not but you have had an acct. of the poor Genl.'s death by some of the affrighted Waggoners, who ran off without taking leave. I am, etc. Sir,

38. General Braddock had left Colonel Innes with the command at Wills Creek, under the title of Governor of Fort Cumberland.— *Sparks*.

**\*To MRS. MARY WASHINGTON**

[Fort Cumberland, July 18, 1755.]

Honour'd Mad'm: As I doubt not but you have heard of our defeat, and perhaps have it represented in a worse light (if possible) than it deserves; I have taken this earliest opportunity to give you some acct. of the Engagement, as it happen'd within 7 miles of the French Fort, on Wednesday the 9th. Inst.

We March'd on to that place with't any considerable loss, having only now and then a stragler pick'd up by the French Scoutg. Ind'nd. When we came there, we were attack'd by a Body of French and Indns. whose number, (I am certain) did not exceed 300 Men; our's consisted of abt. 1,300 well arm'd Troops; chiefly of the English Soldiers, who were struck with such a panick, that they behav'd with more cowardice than it is possible to conceive; The Officers behav'd Gallantly in order to encourage their Men, for which they suffer'd greatly; there being near 60 kill'd and wounded; a large proportion out of the number we had! The Virginia Troops shew'd a good deal of Bravery, and were near all kill'd; for I believe out of 3 Companys that were there, there is scarce 30 Men left alive; Capt. Peyrouny and all his Officer's down to a Corporal was kill'd; Capt. Polson shar'd near as hard a Fate; for only one of his was left: In short the dastardly behaviour of those they call regular's expos'd all others that were inclin'd to do their duty to almost certain death; and at last, in dispiht of all the efforts of the Officer's to the Contrary, they broke and run as Sheep pursued by dogs; and it was impossible to rally them.

The Genl. was wounded; of w'ch he died 3 Days after; Sir Peter Halket was kill'd in the Field where died many other brave Officer's; I luckily escap'd

with't a wound, tho' I had four Bullets through my Coat, and two Horses shot under me; Captns. Orme and Morris two of the Genls. Aids de Camp, were wounded early in the Engagem't. which render'd the duty hard upon me, as I was the only person then left to distribute the Genl's. Orders which I was scarcely able to do, as I was not half recover'd from a violent illness, that confin'd me to my Bed, and a Waggon, for above 10 Days; I am still in a weak and Feeble cond'n; which induces me to halt here, 2 or 3 Days in hopes of recov'g. a little Strength, to enable me to proceed homewards; from whence, I fear I shall not be able to stir till towards Sept., so that I shall not have the pleasure

of seeing you till then, unless it be in Fairfax; please to give my love to Mr. Lewis and my Sister,<sup>42</sup>  
and Compts. to Mr. Jackson<sup>43</sup> and all other Fds. that enquire after me. I am, Hon'd Madam Yr. most  
dutiful Son

P.S. You may acqt. Priscilla Mullican that her Son Charles is very well, hav'g only rec'd a slight w'd in  
his Foot, w'ch will be cur'd with't detrimt. to him, in a very small time.

We had abt. 300 Men kill'd and as many, and more, wounded.

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42. Fielding Lewis, who married Elizabeth (Betty) Washington.

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43. Probably Robert Jackson, one of the witnesses to Augustine Washington's will.

**\*To ROBERT DINWIDDIE**

Fort Cumberland, July 18, 1755.

Honbl. Sir: As I am favour'd with an oppertunity, I shou'd think myself in excusable ? was I to omit  
giv'g you some acct. of our late Engagem't with the French on the Monongahela the 9th. Inst.

We continued our March from Fort Cumberland to Frazier's (which is within 7 Miles of Duquisne)  
with't meet'g with any extraordinary event, hav'g only a stragler or two picked up by the French  
Indians. When we came to this place, we were attack'd (very unexpectedly I must own) by abt. 300  
French and Ind'ns; Our numbers consisted of abt. 1300 well arm'd Men, chiefly Regular's, who  
were immediately struck with such a deadly Panick, that nothing but confusion and disobedience  
of order's prevail'd amongst them: The Officer's in gen'l behav'd with incomparable bravery, for  
which they greatly suffer'd, there being near 60 kill'd and wound'd. A large proportion, out of the  
number we had! The Virginian Companies behav'd like Men and died like Soldiers; for I believe out  
of the 3 Companys that were there that day, scarce 30 were left alive: Capt'n. Peyrouny and all his  
Officer's, down to a Corporal, were kill'd; Capt'n. Polson shar'd almost as hard a Fate, for only one  
of his Escap'd: In short the dastardly behaviour of the English Soldier's expos'd all those who were  
inclin'd to do their duty to almost certain Death; and at length, in despite of every effort to the  
contrary, broke and run as Sheep before the Hounds, leav'g the Artillery, Ammunition, Provisions,  
and, every individual thing we had with us a prey to the Enemy; and when we endeavour'd to rally  
them in hopes of regaining our invaluable loss, it was with as much success as if we had attempted  
to have stop'd the wild Bears of the Mountains.<sup>39</sup>

39. "Fearful of an unpursuing foe, all the ammunition, and so much of the provisions were destroyed for accelerating their flight, that Dunbar was actually obliged to send for thirty horse loads of the latter before he reached Fort Cumberland, where he arrived a very few days after, with the shattered remains of the English troops."— *Review of the Military Operations in North America*.

The Genl. was wounded behind in the shoulder, and into the Breast, of w'ch he died three days after; his two Aids de Camp were both wounded, but are in a fair way of Recovery; Colo. Burton and Sir Jno. St. Clair are also wounded, and I hope will get over it; Sir Peter Halket, with many other brave Officers were kill'd in the Field. I luckily escap'd with't a wound tho' I had four Bullets through my Coat and two Horses shot under me. It is suppose that we left 300 or more dead in the Field; about that number we brought of wounded; and it is imagin'd (I believe with great justice too) that two thirds of both [?] <sup>40</sup> received their shott from our own cowardly English Soldier's who gather'd themselves into a body contrary to orders 10 or 12 deep, wou'd then level, Fire and shoot down the Men before them.

I tremble at the consequences that this defeat may have upon our back settlers, who I suppose will all leave their habitations unless there are proper measures taken for their security.

Colo. Dunbar, who commands at present, intends so soon as his Men are recruited at this place, to continue his March to Phila. into Winter Quarters: <sup>41</sup> so that there will be no Men left here unless it is the poor remains of the Virginia Troops, who survive and will be too small to guard our Frontiers. As Captn. Orme is writg. to your honour I doubt not but he will give you a circumstantial acct. of all things, which will make it needless for me to add more than that I am, etc.

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40. Two words obliterated.

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41. The regulars laid the responsibility of defeat on the provincials, alleging "that they were harassed by duties unequal to their numbers, and dispirited through want of provisions; that time was not allowed them to dress their food; that their water (the only liquor, too, they had) was both scarce and of a bad quality; in fine, that the provincials had disheartened them by repeated suggestions of their fears of a defeat should they be attacked by Indians, in which case the European method of fighting would be entirely unavailing."— *Review of the Military Operations in North America* (1753 to 1756). The *Gentleman's Magazine* asserted these same forces—Irish, Scotch, and English—ran away "shamefully" at Prestonpans. The news of Braddock's defeat "struck a general damp on the spirits of the soldiers" in Shirley's and Pepperell's regiments, and many deserted. "I must leave a proper number in each county to protect it from the combinations of the negro slaves, who have been very



audacious on the defeat on the Ohio. These poor creatures imagine the French will give them their freedom.”— *Dinwiddie to Earl of Halifax*, July 23, 1755.

Dinwiddie wished Dunbar to remain and make a new attempt on Duquesne; but a council of officers unanimously decided the scheme was impracticable, and on the next day (August 2) began his march toward Philadelphia

### **\*To JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Fort Cumberland, July 18, 1755.

Dear Jack: As I have heard since my arriv'l at this place, a circumstantial acct. of my death and dying speech, I take this early oppertunity of contradicting both, and of assuring you that I now exist and appear in the land of the living by the miraculous care of Providence, that protected me beyond all human expectation; I had 4 Bullets through my Coat, and two Horses shot under me, and yet escaped unhurt.<sup>44</sup>

We have been most scandalously beaten by a trifling body of men; but fatigue and want of time prevents me from giving any of the details till I have the happiness of seeing you at home; which I now most ardently wish for, since we are drove in thus far. A Weak and Feeble state of Health, obliges me to halt here for 2 or 3 days, to recover a little strength, that I may thereby be enabled to proceed homewards with more ease; You may expect to see me there on Saturday or Sunday Se'night, which is as soon as I can well be down as I shall take my Bulb skin Plantation's in my way.<sup>45</sup> Pray give my Compl'ts to all my F'ds. I am Dr. Jack, y'r most Affect. Broth'r

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44. The 1784–85 change is as follows: “oppertunity of contradicting the first and of assuring you that I have not as yet, composed the latter. But by the all powerful dispensams. of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability and expectation for I had 4 Bullets” etc.

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45. He arrived at Mount Vernon on July 26. He still retained the office of adjutant of the northern division of militia, and immediately wrote to the county lieutenants, ordering the militia to be ready and properly equipped in each county on certain days, when he should be present to review and exercise them. Such was the alarm created by the success of the French at Braddock's Defeat that volunteer companies embodied themselves in different parts of Virginia to march to the frontiers. The Rev. Samuel Davies, at that time a clergyman in Hanover County, preached a sermon to one of these companies on August 17, which was printed in Philadelphia and London, and entitled *Religion*

*and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier*. After applauding the patriotic spirit and military ardor, which had begun to manifest themselves, the preacher adds: "As a remarkable instance of this, I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country."— *Sparks*.

**\*To ROBERT ORME**

Mount Vernon, July 28, 1755.

My Dear Orme: I arrived at Home the day before yesterday, without meeting with an Egachee,<sup>46</sup> or any other remarkable event. I called at Belhavem purposely to acquaint Majr. Carlyle with your desire, who will use all possible means to procure a Vessel though I fear it will be somewhat difficult at present as the Shipping have most of them employ'd, in transporting the Tobo. from the diff't. Warehouses

It is impossible to relate the diff't. accts. that was given of our late unhappy Engagem't; but all tend'd, greatly to the disadvantage of the poor deceas'd Genl., who is censur'd on all hands. As I have no cert'n conveyance for this Letter I shall only add my sincere compt's to Morris, Burton, George and Dobson and shall take an oppertunity of writ'g to you at Philidelphia, and of being more particular, I am my Dear Orme, etc.

I shou'd take it particularly kind if Morris wou'd get the Order's copied from the 6th. of June to the 9th. of July, and send them to me by the first safe conveyance.

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46. It is possible that Orme and other army friends of Washington who had been wounded but survived the action at the Monongahela, rallied Washington on being a favorite of the gods because of his scathless escape from the massacre. This would permit the word "egachee" to be interpreted as ægis, in the sense of a protective influence, a plural which Washington spelled by its sound to him. An old spelling of ægis is egis.

**\*To BENJAMIN GRYMES<sup>47</sup>**

Mount Vernon, July 31, 1755.

Sir: I don't remember to have receiv'd more than one letter from you, and that I shou'd have answer'd; but knowing that I cou'd give you no satisfactory acct. myself, of your Bed &c., I thought it more advisable to desire Doctr. Walker<sup>48</sup> to enquire of Mr. Gist,<sup>49</sup> and of Colo. Cresap<sup>50</sup> (at whose Ho. I perfectly remember the great Tent was left) concerning them, and to let you know their answer.

I have since recollected, and think I am very certain, that Vanbraam (who was left out after Gist and I came off on Foot) charged with these and other things, told me that after hav'g most of his Horses tire, he was oblig'd to leave your things, with many of my own, out at Mr. Gists Ho. where they must have been burnt and destroy'd with his Plantation.<sup>51</sup>

If you are going to England I heartily wish you a good Voyage, and the attainment of your utmost desires. I am Sir, etc.

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47. After Grymes returned from England he was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses.

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48. Dr. Thomas Walker, formerly a major in the British Army, whose daughter was the second wife of Hon. William Fairfax and the mother of George William Fairfax.

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49. Christopher Gist.

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50. Col. Thomas Cresap, one of the famous Colonial frontiersmen.

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51. The tent, bed, and other things which were carried on Washington's journey to Fort Le Bœuf in 1753-54.

### **\*To ROBERT JACKSON**

Mount Vernon, August 2, 1755.

Dr. Sir: I must acknowledge you had great reason to be terrified with the first acc'ts, that was given of our unhappy defeat, and I must own, I was not a little surpris'd to find that Governor Innis was the means of alarming the Country with a report of that extraordinary nature, without having any better confirmation of the truth, than an affrighted waggoner's story. Its true, we have been beaten, most shamefully beaten, by a handful of Men ! who only intended to molest and disturb our March; Victory was their smallest expectation, but see the wondrous works of Providence! the uncertainty of Human things! We, but a few moments before, believ'd our number's almost equal to the Canadian

Force; they only expected to annoy us. Yet, contrary to all expectation and human probability, and even to the common course of things, we were totally defeated, sustain'd the loss of every thing; which they have got, are enrichen'd

and strengthened by it. This, as you observe, must be an affecting story to the Colony; and will, no doubt, license the tongues of People to censure those they think most blamably; which by the by, often falls very wrongfully. I join very heartily with you in believing that when this story comes to be related in future Annals, it will meet with ridicule or indignation; for had I not been witness to the fact on that fatal Day, I sh'd scarce give credit to it now.

Whenever it suits you to come into Fairfax I hope you will make your home at Mount Vernon. Please to give my Compts. to all inquiring Friends; and I assure you, nothing cou'd have added greater satisfaction to my safe return, than hearing of the friendly concern that was express'd on my suppos'd Death. I am, &c.

**\*To AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON<sup>52</sup>**

Mount Vernon, August 2, 1755.

Dear Brother: The pleasure of your Company at Mount Vernon always did, and always will, afford me infinite satisfaction; but at this time, I am *too* truly sensible how needful the Country is of the assistance of all its members, to desire to hear that any are absent.<sup>53</sup> I most sincerely wish that harmony and unanimity may prevail amongst you, and that a happy issue may attend your prudent resolutions.

I am not able were I ever so willing, to meet you in Town, for I assure you it is with some difficulty and with fatigue that I visit my Plantation's in the Neck, so much has a sickness of five weeks' continuance reduced me: But tho it is not in my power to meet you there, I can nevertheless assure you, and other's (who it may concern to borrow a phrase from Governor Innes) that I am so little dispirited at what has happen'd, that I am always ready and always willing, to do my Country any Services that I am capable off; but never upon the Terms I have done, having suffer'd much in my private fortune, besides impairing one of the best of Constitution's.

I was employ'd to go a journey in the Winter (when I believe few or none wou'd have undertaken it) and what did I get by it? my expenses borne! I then was appointed with trifling Pay to conduct an handful of Men to the Ohio. What did I get by this? Why, after putting myself to a considerable

expençe in equipping and providing necessarys for the Campaigne I went out, was soundly beaten, lost them all—came in, and had my Commission taken from me

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52. Augustine Washington was half brother to George and full brother to Lawrence; he was then at Williamsburg as a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses.

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53. Absent from the legislature.

or, in other words my Corn'd, reduced, under pretence of an Order from home. I then went out a Volunteer with Genl. Braddock and lost all my Horses and many other things, but this being a voluntary act, I shou'd not have mention'd it, was it not to shew that I have been upon the loosing order ever since I enter'd the Service, which is now near two year's; so that I think I can't be blare'd, shou'd I, if I leave my Family again, end'vt. to do it upon such terms as to prevent my sufferg., (to gain by it, is the least of my expectation).

I doubt not but you have heard the particulars of our shameful defeat, which really was so scandalous that I hate to have it mention'd. You desire to know what Artillery was taken in the late Eng't; it is easily told, we lost all that we carr'd out, save 2 Six pound'rs, and a few Cohorns that were left with Colo. Dunbar; and the Cohorns have since been destroy'd to expedate his flight. You also ask whether I think the Forces can March this Fall. I must answer, I think it impossible, for them to do the French any damage (unless it be by starv'g) for want of a proper Train of Artillery; yet they may be very serviceable in erect'g small Fortresses at convenient places to deposit provisions in, by which the Country will be eas'd of an immense expence in the Carriage, and it will also be a mean's of securing a Retreat if we sh'd be put to the Rout again; the success of this tho' will dep'd gre'tly upon what Gov'r. Shirley does at Niagara, for if he succeeds, their Comn. with Canada will be entirely stop'd.

It is impossible for me to guess at the number of recruits that may be want'g, as that must depend altogeth'r upon the strength of the French on the Ohio, w'ch to my g't. astonishm't we were ever strangers to.

I thank you very heartily for your kind offer of a Chr. and for your goodness in sending my things; and, after begg'g you excuse the imperfect'ns. of the above which in part are owing to hav'g much Comp'y that hurrys me I shall conclude Dr. Sir, Yr. most Afft. Broth'r.

**\*To EACH COUNTY LIEUTENANT IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT**

Mount Vernon, August 2, 1755.

Sir: I intend myself the honour of waitg. upon your County, in order to exercise the Militia; and shou'd be glad if you wou'd appoint your Officer's to meet me at the Court Ho., or some other convenient place with a Firelock, Ammunition, &c. on the of September next, and the Militia properly accoutre'd, the day following. I am Sir, etc.

Fairfax Officers 31st 1st. Militia Prince Wm 4 5 Culpeper 8 9 Stafford 12 13 King George 15 16  
Westmoreland 19 20 Richmond 22 23 Northumberland 26 27 Lancaster 29 30 September

**\*To COLIN CAMPBELL**

Mount Vernon, August 2, 1755.

Sir: [The Army und'r the Com'd of G: Braddock has met with an unfortunate defeat, which has occasioned my ret'n]<sup>54</sup> from the Ohio; [This circumstance enables me to order] the Militia of the several Countys in my district, to meet me and I have therefore taken this earliest oppertunity of inform'g you of it; that you may not be troubled ab't any but Eastern Shore Countys, unless you will undertake to exercise the whole (saving the two Frontier Countys viz Fairfax and Prince Win. which I will take the trouble off) for the Consideration of 40,£'s if you accept of this offer, I shou'd be glad to know it before the first of Sept. and I have enclos'd you a Mem'm. of the appointed times that I have desit'd the Officer's, and Militia of each County to meet, that you may proceed accordingly. I am Sir, etc.

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54. The bracketed portions of this letter are the readings as changed in 1784–85. Washington made the erasures with a knife, and the original wording is completely obliterated.

**\*To MRS. MARY WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, August 14, 1755.

Honor'd Madam: If it is in my power to avoid going to the Ohio again, I shall, but if the Command is press'd upon me by the genl. voice of the Country, and offer'd upon such terms as can't be objected against, it wou'd reflect eternal dishonour upon me to refuse it; and that, I am sure must, or ought, to give you greater cause of uneasiness than my going in an honourable Com'd.; for upon no other

terms I will accept of it if I do at all; at present I have no proposals or any mention made abt. it only from private hands. I am etc.

**\*To WARNER LEWIS<sup>55</sup>**

Mount Vernon, August 14, 1755.

Dear Sir: After returning the most sincere and grateful thanks for your kind condolence on my late indisposition; and for the too generous, and give me leave further to say, partial opinion you have entertain'd of my ability's; I must express my concern for not having it in my power to meet you, and other Friends, who have signified their desire of seeing me (in Williamsburg). Your Letter only came to hand at nine last Night, and you inform me of the Assembly breaking up the latter end of the Week, which allows a time too short to perform a journey of 160 miles distance particularly by a person in my weak and feeble condition altho' I am happily recover'd from the low ebb to w'ch I was reduced by a sickness of near 5 Weeks continuance. Had I got timely notice, I wou'd have attempted the ride by slow and easy journeys, if it had been only for the satisfaction of seeing my Friends, who I flatter myself from what you say, are kind enough to sympathise in my good, and evil Fortunes.

The Chief Reason (next to indisposition) that prev'd me from coming down to this Assembly was a determination not to offer myself, and that determination proceeded from the following Reason's.

1st. a belief that I cou'd not get a command upon such terms as I shou'd care to accept;<sup>56</sup> as I must confess I never will quit my Family, injure my Fortune, and (above all) impair my health to run the risque of such Changes and

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55. Warner Lewis's letter is not in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress; it was inclosed in a letter from Charles Lewis to Washington, which is among those papers, and is printed in S. M. Hamilton's *Letters to Washington* (Boston: 1898), vol. 1, p. 75.

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56. While Colonel Washington was writing this letter he had already been appointed to the command. The assembly voted £40,000 for the public service, and the governor and council immediately resolved to increase the Virginia Regiment to 16 companies, In the same same act the assembly also granted to George Washington the sum of £300, to the captains £75 each, to the lieutenants and surgeon £30, and to every soldier £5 as "a reward and compensation for their gallant behaviour and losses," at the Monongahela. Washington's grant was for his losses sustained.

"I have granted commissions to raise sixteen companies, to augment our forces to one thousand men, and have incorporated them into a regiment. The command thereof is given to Colonel George Washington, who was one of General Braddock's aids-de-camp, and I think a man of great merit and resolution. Our officers are greatly dispirited for want of his Majesty's commissions, that, when they join the regulars they may have some rank; and I am persuaded it would be of infinite service, if his Majesty would graciously please to honor them with his commissions, the same as General Shirley's and Sir William Pepperell's regiments; and I am convinced, if General Braddock had survived, he would have recommended Mr. Washington to the royal favor, which I beg your interest in recommending." — *Dinwiddie to Sir Thomas Robinson*, Sept. 6, 1755.

Washington's commission from Dinwiddie, dated Aug. 14, 1755, appointed him colonel of the Virginia Regiment and commander in chief of all the forces now raised and to be raised for the defense of his Majesty's colony and for repelling the unjust and hostile invasions of the French and their Indian allies. A peculiar sense of economy inspired Dinwiddie to specially note that Washington's pay commenced September 1. In the instructions accompanying the commission the French are accused of unjustly invading his Majesty's lands on the Ohio; the Virginia Regiment is to consist of 16 companies; goods and presents were to be purchased for the Indians: morality and virtue were to be inculcated among the troops and drunkenness and swearing were to be punished. The text of Washington's commission and instructions are printed in the *Dinwiddie Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 184–187.

Vicissitudes as I have done; but shall now expect, if I am employ'd again, to have something certain again, was I to have the command, I shou'd insist upon somethings which ignorance and inexperience made me overlook before, particularly that of having the Officers in some measure appointed *with* my advice, and with my concurrence; for I must say, I think a commanding Officer not hav'g this liberty appear's to me to be one of the strangest thing in Life, when it is well known how much the conduct and bravery of an Officer influences the Men; how much a Commanding Officer is answerable for the behaviour of the inferiour Officer's; and how much his good or ill success in time of action depends upon the conduct of each particular Officer; especially in this kind of Fighting, where being dispers'd, each and every of them at that immediate time, has greater liberty to misbehave than if he were regularly, and compactly drawn up under the Eyes of their superior Officer's. However on the other hand, how little credit is given to a Commander, who perhaps after a defeat, in relating the cause justly lays the blame on some individual whose cowardly behav'r betray'd the whole to ruin; how little does the World consider the Circumstances, and how apt are mankind to level their vindictive Censures against the unfortunate Chief, who perhaps merited least of the blame. Does it not appear then that the appointing of Officers is a thing of the utmost consequence; a thing that shou'd require the greatest circumspection; ought it to be left to blind



chance? or what is still worse, to a forced partiality? Shou'd it not be left to a Man whose powers and what is still dearer, whose honour depends upon their good Examples.

There are necessary Officer's yet wanting, which no Pro, vision have been made for. A small Military Chest is so absolutely necessary, that it is impossible to do without,

nor no Man can conduct an affair of this kind who has it not. These things I shou'd expect, was I appointed.

But, besides all these, I had other Reasons wh'h with'd me f'm offering. I believe our Circumstances are now to that unhappy Dilemma that no Man can gain any Honour by conduct'g our Forces at this time, but rather loose in his reputation; for I am very confid't the progress must be slow for want of conveniences to transport our Provisions &c. over the Mountains and this chiefly occasion'd, by the late ill treatm't of the Waggoner's and Horse driver's, who have rec'd little for their Lab'r and noth'g for their lost Hors's and Wag'ns; w'ch will be an infallible mean's of prevent'g all from assist'g that are not oblig'd; so that I am truly sensible, whoever undertakes it will meet with such insurmountable obstacles that he will be soon look'd upon in the very light of an idle, indolent body, have his conduct censured and perhaps meet with opprobrious abuse, when it is as much out of his power to avoid these delays as to com'd the rag'g Seas in a Storm. Seeing these things in the above light that I did, had no small influence upon me, as I was pretty much assur'd I shou'd loose what at present constitutes the chief part of my happiness, i.e. the esteem and notice the Country has been pleas'd to honour me with.

It is possible you may infer from what I have said that my intention's is to decline at all events, but my meaning is entirely different: I was determin'd not to offer, because to solicit the Command and at the same time to make my proposals I thought wou'd look a little incongruous, and to carry a face of too much self sufficiency, as if I imagin'd there were none other's equally (if not more) capable of conducting the affair than myself; But if the command shou'd be offer'd the case is then alter'd as I am at liberty to make such objection's as my Reason and my small experience have pointed out. I hope you'll make my Comp's to all inquiring F'ds. I am Dr. Warner Y'r etc.

**\*To CHARLES LEWIS**

Mount Vernon, August 14, 1755.

Dear Sir: I return most unfeigned thanks for your hearty demonstrations of Friendship, in kind congratulation's on my safe return, and I wish dear Charles, it was more in my power than it is to

answer the favourable opinion my Friends have conceiv'd of my abilitys, let them not be deceiv'd, I am unequal to the Task, and do assure you it requires more experience than I am master of to conduct an affair of the importance that this is now arisen to.

If I do go, I shou'd think myself happy in havg. you of our party, if you have reconcil'd it perfectly to yourself and Family, otherwise I think you wou'd be blameable to involve them in so much uneasiness as your absence will necessarily give; I have wrote fully to your Broth'r Wnr. to whom I must refer you for further particular's I am Dr. Charles, etc.

**\*To RICHARD WASHINGTON**

December 6, 1755.

Sir: Inclos'd is a Bill of Lading for three H'hds Tobo. Ship'd on Board the <sup>56</sup> Captn. Merrie for London which please to make the most of.

I ought first Sir, to have apologiz'd for the aubr't manner in which I begin this corrispondance but I hope to obtain an excuse when I say I was induc'd to this by the good opinion I have conceiv'd of your merit from the reports of Colo. Fairfax and others who are happier than I, in being of your acquaintance. If you approve of my Beginning I shall have it in my power to Ship a larger quantity of Tobo., and shall Consign them to you. These three were only put on board to oblige Merrie who labour'd under some difficulty in getting a Load.

I have a Ball'e. of £6-18-1 in the hands of Mr. Anthony Bacon;<sup>57</sup> please to call upon him for it, he is advis'd thereof. Inclos'd is an Invoice of Sundries which I entreat you to buy and send me by the first Ship in the Spring either to the head of Potomack or Rappahannock; the cost of these things will amount to more than the Tobo. &c. for which Reason I shall take the earliest opportunity of remitting you a Bill of Exchange. I have left many of the Articles with blank prices leaving it discretionary in you to fix them with this only desire, that you will choose agreeable to the present taste, and send things good of their kind. The Livery Suits must be made by measures taken of Men as near their size as you can judge. I shou'd be glad to cultivate the most intimate Corrispondance with you, not only for names-sake but as a friend, and that endeavour in all things to approve myself worthy your regard. I am Sir, Yr. Most Obed't H'bly Serv't

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56. Left blank in the original. As the first order on London for goods, both letter and invoice merit attention. Richard Washington, the London merchant, was considered by George Washington as a relation, though the exact kinship is vague.

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57. Anthony Bacon, a London merchant. Washington purchased supplies from him later.

**\*INVOICE OF SUNDRY GOODS TO BE SHIP'D FOR THE USE OF GEO. WASHINGTON AT MOUNT  
VERNON, POTOMAC RIVER VIRGINIA<sup>58</sup>**

2 Compleat Livery Suits for Servants, the Cloath<sup>\*</sup> a 10s. pt. yard; Spare Cloath, and all other necessary trimmings for two Suits more.

1 Sett horse Furniture, with livery Lace, and the Washington Crest on the housing &c. The Cloath to be of the same colour and price of the Clothes

1 piece of Irish Linnen a 7s. pr. yd.

1 piece of suitable Cambrick for Ruffles any other Ruffles that are more fashionable and not very expensive. Also 1 oth'r. ps. Ir'sh Lin'n a 5s.

2 pair Men's Silk Stockings mix'd Colour's

4 pr. Cotton Do a 12s 6 a pr.

4 pr. Thread Do 6s do

3 Gold and Scarlet Sword knots

3 Silver and blew Do

1 Blands Military Discipline<sup>59</sup>

1 Fashionable Gold Lac'd Hatt.

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\*The Servants that these Liverys are intended for, are 5 feet, 9 Inc. and 5 f. 4 In. high and proportionably. made I wou'd have you choose the livery by our Arms; only, as the Field of the Arms is white. I think the Cloaths had better not be quite so but nearly likely the inclos'd. The Trimmings

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and Facings of Scarlet and a Scarlet Waistcoat, the Cloath of w'ch to be 12S 6 pr. yd. If livery Lace is not quite disus'd, I shou'd be glad to have these cloaths laced. I like that fashion best; and two Silver lac'd hats for the above Livery's.

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58. This letter and invoice were first entered in the so-called "Braddock Expedition Letter Book." Washington later reentered them in the volume labeled "Invoices and Letters," where he made minor changes in phraseology, the only important one being in the two pair of men's silk stockings, which he changed from "mixed Colour's" to "marbled colour'd."

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59. Humphrey Bland's *Treatise of Military Discipline*, in which is laid down and explained the duty of the officer and soldier through the several branches of the service. The first edition seems to have been published in London in 1727. It went through nine editions up to 1762. Griffin's Catalogue, Washington Collection, in Boston Atheneum, notes that Washington orders Bland in his invoice of April, 1757. It is difficult to see the reason for a popular conception that Washington studied exclusively Thomas Simes's work on military science. He did not apparently obtain a copy of Simes, which was published in 1777, until 1778. There are a number of books on military science listed by Griffin as having been in Washington's possession, and among those published early enough to have been used by Washington before the Revolutionary War may be noted such words as Bland's, Clairac's *Field Engineer* (Dublin: 1758), Saxe's *Plan for Remodelling the French Army* (London: 1753), Lebold's *Engineer* (London: 1759), Starrat's *Doctrine of Projectiles* (Dublin: 1753), and the various works published by Muller before 1770.